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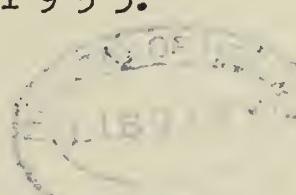
A N N U A L   R E P O R T

on the

H E A L T H   O F   T H E   R U R A L   D I S T R I C T

F O R   T H E   Y E A R   1 9 5 3.

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R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL   OFFICER   OF   HEALTH

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BRIDGWATER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Health Department Staff, 1953.

Medical Officer of Health:

R.H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector:

F.A. MAILE, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Assistant Sanitary Inspector:

B.S. YULE, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

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Committees of the Council dealing with  
health matters:-

1. Public Health Committee.
2. Housing Committee.
3. Council Houses Committee.



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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1953

Health Department,  
Albert Street,  
Bridgwater.

June, 1954.

To:-

The Chairman and Members of the  
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1953.

The health of the community has been good and apart from an epidemic of measles there has been no undue incidence of any of the notifiable infectious diseases. Despite a high incidence of infantile paralysis in other parts of the County, only two cases were notified in the Rural District during the year. They were both paralytic cases, but are responding well to treatment.

The Crude Birth Rate was 15.26, which when corrected for age and sex distribution of the population gave a Corrected Birth Rate of 17.09, as compared with that of 18.29 for the previous year. The Provisional Birth Rate for England and Wales was 15.5.

The Crude Death Rate was 9.40, which when corrected for age and sex distribution of the population gave a Corrected Death Rate of 8.18, as compared with 10.54 for the previous year. The Provisional Death Rate for England and Wales was 11.4.

The Infantile Mortality Rate was 12.90, as compared with 18.87 the previous year. Two years ago this rate was 25.64. The Infantile Mortality Rate is a most important index to the health of an area and although the figures involved are small and liable to considerable fluctuation, it is nevertheless most satisfactory to record such a low rate. The Provisional Infantile Mortality Rate for the Country as a whole was 26.8.

Housing.

During the year 110 permanent houses were erected by the Council and a further 40 were in course of erection. 47 houses were erected by Private Enterprise. The number of applicants for Council houses at the end of the year was 540.

I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the Members of the Council and the Staff for the help and co-operation which I have received from them.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON.



STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1953

Area (Acres).	86,000
Population (Registrar General's estimate) 1953.	20,310
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1953	5,700
Rateable value on 31st December, 1953.	£82,814
Sum represente by 1d. rate on 31st December, 1953.	£ 340

Live Births.

	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	174	129	303
Illegitimate	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>
	<u><u>179</u></u>	<u><u>131</u></u>	<u><u>310</u></u>

<u>Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 of estimated resident population	15.26
Corrected Birth Rate	17.09
<u>Still Births</u> ...      ...      ...      ...      ...      ...      ...	4
<u>Still Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 total (live & still) births	12.74
<u>Death Rate</u> per 1,000 of estimated resident population	9.40
Corrected Death Rate	8.18

Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age)

Legitimate	4
Illegitimate	<u>—</u>
	<u><u>4</u></u>

Rate of all infants per 1,000 births	12.90
Rate of all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	13.20
Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	Nil

Other Deaths

Deaths from Heart Disease	48
Deaths from Cancer	36
Deaths from Tuberculosis	3



## VITAL STATISTICS

### Births.

After allowing for inward and outward transfers, the figure allocated by the Registrar General for live births in the Rural District was 310, 179 were male and 131 were female.

### Birth Rates.

	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Bridgwater Rural District.	18.96	18.54	17.42	20.61	18.39	14.33	15.98	15.54	16.33	15.26
England & Wales.	17.6	16.6	19.1	20.5	17.9	16.7	15.8	15.5	15.3	15.5

### Deaths.

After allowing for inward and outward transfers the total number of deaths allocated to the Rural District was 191, 115 were males and 76 were females. The Crude Death Rate was 9.40, and the Corrected Death Rate was 8.18, as compared with 10.54 the previous year.

Of the total of 191 deaths, 99 occurred in people over the age of 70 years. The primary cause of death was heart disease 48, with cancer second 36.

The Crude Death Rate for the past ten years is as follows:-

1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
13.29	12.41	13.89	13.13	10.62	12.06	11.78	12.65	12.12	9.40

### Infant Mortality.

The number of children dying within the first twelve months of life was 4, which is lower than the previous year. The rate per 1,000 of all live births was 12.90.

### Infantile Mortality during 1953.

Cause of death	Under 1 week	1 - 4 weeks	1 - 6 months	6 - 12 months	Total under 1 year
Prematurity	1	2			3
Heart failure			1		1
TOTAL	1	2	1		4



CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1953

CAUSE OF DEATH	M	F	TOTAL
ALL CAUSES	115	76	191
1. Tuberculosis of respiratory system	2	-	2
2. Other forms of tuberculosis	1	-	1
3. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping cough	-	-	-
6. Meningococcal infections	-	-	-
7. Acute poliomyelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	-	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	1	1
10. Malignant neoplasm of stomach	4	2	6
11. Malignant neoplasm of lung, bronchus	6	2	8
12. Malignant neoplasm of breast	-	1	1
13. Malignant neoplasm of uterus	-	-	-
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	12	9	21
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16. Diabetes	-	1	1
17. Vascular lesions of the nervous system	18	11	29
18. Coronary disease, angina	7	4	11
19. Hypertension with heart disease	2	1	3
20. Other heart diseases	14	20	34
21. Other circulatory diseases	8	10	18
22. Influenza	1	3	4
23. Pneumonia	4	-	4
24. Bronchitis	3	1	4
25. Other diseases of the respiratory system	-	1	1
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	2	-	2
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	1	1
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	2	1	3
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	1	-	1
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	-	-
31. Congenital malformations	1	-	1
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	10	4	14
33. Motor vehicle accidents	5	1	6
34. All other accidents	9	2	11
35. Suicide	2	-	2
36. Homicide and operations of war	-	-	-

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS  
AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable infectious diseases that occurred in the Rural District during 1953. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioner, or the Medical Officer at the Isolation Hospital.

DISEASE	CASES NOTIFIED	
	1953	1952
Measles	322	13
Scarlet Fever	22	31
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1
Dysentery	-	3
Whooping Cough	22	63
Pneumonia	8	11
Poliomyelitis	2	1
Erysipelas	-	3
	377	126



### Infantile Paralysis.

Although there was a high incidence of infantile paralysis in parts of Somerset, only two cases were notified in the Bridgwater Rural District.

### Diphtheria Immunisation.

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year.

Aged under 5 years.	Aged 5-15 years	TOTAL
182	46	228

The method of protection commonly in use is to give each child two immunising injections at the age of one year, and a third re-inforcing injection early in school life. The re-inforcing injection is most important to ensure protection during the early school years, and 311 such injections were given during the year.

### Vaccination against Smallpox.

No cases of smallpox occurred in the Bridgwater Rural District during 1953. 92 primary vaccinations and 24 re-vaccinations against smallpox were carried out by private general practitioners during the year. The following table, giving the age distribution of persons vaccinated, shows that only 69 children under the age of one year received primary vaccination, while the number of live births for the year was 310.

#### Persons vaccinated (or re-vaccinated) in 1953.

Under 1		1		2 - 4		5 - 14		15 or over		Totals.	
P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
69	-	8	-	4	2	5	-	6	22	92	24

P = Primary Vaccination.

R = Re-vaccination.

The proportion of the population vaccinated against smallpox has fallen very considerably since the inception of the National Health Service Act 1946, which repealed compulsory vaccination. This trend is to be regretted, as due to the increased facilities for internation travelling, the risk of importation of the disease is greater, and all parents are advised to have their children vaccinated, preferably at about the age of 4 months.



## Tuberculosis.

There were 26 cases of respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. 1 case of non-respiratory tuberculosis was notified.

## Prevention of Tuberculosis.

1. As a means of detecting early and unsuspected cases of tuberculosis, arrangements were made for the Mass Radiography Unit of the South West Regional Hospital Board to visit Bridgwater in October. The attendance was very satisfactory and the Unit visited the larger factories before being stationed at the Health Centre. Although chiefly attended by persons living in Bridgwater, the sessions during which examinations were available to members of the public were attended by many people residing in the Rural District.

A total of 5,390 persons (3,191 males and 2,199 females) attended for examination and 74 cases of tuberculosis were brought to light. Of the tuberculous cases 65 were inactive. Of the 9 active cases all were dealt with by supervision or treatment at the Bridgwater Chest Clinic.

## Analysis of Tuberculosis Cases.

### Tuberculous Conditions.

	Male	Female	Total	Disposal			
				N.A.	Dr.	Disp.	San.
<u>Active</u>							
Primary Lesion							
Post-Primary unilateral	3	6	9				9
Post-Primary bilateral							
Tuberculous pleural effusion							
Total	3	6	9				9

### Inactive

Primary Lesion	15	14	29	27	1	2	
Post-Primary Lesion	24	12	36	23	1	12	
Total	39	26	65	50	1	14	

N.A. = No action.

Dr. = Patient's own doctor.

Disp. = Under observation at Dispensary.

San. = Sanatorium treatment required.



Analysis of Tuberculous Cases.

AGE	Under 15	15/ 24	25/ 34	35/ 44	45/ 59	60 & over	Total
<u>Active Tuberculosis</u>							
Male		1			2		3
Female		3		2	1		6
Total		4		2	3		9

<u>Inactive Tuber-</u> <u>culosis</u>							
Male	3	3	8	12	10	3	39
Female	1	8	7	4	5	1	26
Total	4	11	15	16	15	4	65

2. As one of the danger periods for the onset of tuberculosis is soon after people leave school and take up employment, arrangements were made for school children in their last year at school to attend for X-ray examination. A total of 797 children from schools in the Borough and Rural District attended, but no case of active tuberculosis was discovered.

3. The introduction of B.C.G. vaccination into this Country in order to raise the resistance to tuberculosis of persons particularly susceptible provided a most useful weapon in the fight against the disease. Hitherto, it has been used under conditions carefully controlled by the Ministry of Health and its use has been mainly for the protection of susceptible persons at special risk, e.g. young contacts of active cases, and nurses in sanatoria, etc. Local Education Authorities have now been authorised to submit schemes for the vaccination of susceptible school leavers. It is very probable that such a scheme for this area will be submitted to the Ministry of Education in the near future.

4. The effects of modern treatment of tuberculosis are reflected in the marked decrease in the death rate for respiratory tuberculosis during the past few years, but the notifications of new cases of the disease have not decreased so markedly. It is therefore essential that every effort be made to discover and examine all contacts of cases. It is possible, by means of a simple skin test, to discover whether or not a person has had a tuberculous infection. The test is usually negative in young children, but as they get older and are exposed to minimal degrees of infection, either from other persons, or from infected milk, they may develop the disease or, more usually, they develop a natural resistance to the infection, while at the same time the skin test becomes positive. It was therefore decided to examine school children in their first term at school by means of the skin test. It was felt that if they were examined early in their school days and gave a positive test, it was probable that the source of infection was most likely to be found in the home environment, or in other close contacts. It was therefore hoped that examination of close contacts of those children who gave a positive test would reveal unsuspected active cases of tuberculosis in adults. A total of 433 pupils were tested, of



whom 144 attended school in the Rural District. Altogether 24 children gave positive results. The initial testing was carried out by the School Medical Officers and the follow-up of positive cases was carried out at the Bridgwater Chest Clinic.

The following table shows the results of the follow-up at the Chest Clinic:-

No. of children referred as positive by S.M.O.	24
No. when retested proved to be negative	1
No. who did not attend the Clinic	3
No. already known as contacts	6
No. having already received B.C.G.	2
No. investigated	12

#### Investigates.

No. with no clinical or radiological signs of past or present tubercle	10
No. with abnormal radiological findings	2
(a) Calcified glands R. hilum	1
(b) Healed primary focus L. base	1

#### Contacts.

No. of home adult contacts X-rayed, all N.A.D.	17
No. of home child contacts tuberculin jelly tested, all negative	7

Apart from giving information as to the percentage of school entrants in this area who have been exposed to tuberculous infection, no cases of active tuberculosis, either in school children, or in close contacts, were brought to light as a result of it.

5. Copies of all death certificates for persons dying in the Rural District are received weekly at the Health Department. Occasionally reference is made on these certificates to a tuberculous condition which was not notified during life. These cases are brought to the notice of the Chest Clinic and contacts are followed up. No such cases were found during the past year.

#### NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948, Section 47.

This section of the Act enables Local Authorities to apply to Court for an Order to secure the care of persons who, by reason of infirmity, old age or other conditions, are unable to care for themselves and are not receiving from other people proper care and attention, and who are living in insanitary conditions. Several cases were dealt with, but in no case was it found necessary to proceed for a Court Order. In all cases alternative means were found to alleviate unsatisfactory conditions.

#### Food Poisoning.

I am happy to report that no cases of food poisoning were notified during the year.



### Sewerage.

Work was commenced on the West Huntspill section of the Council's Northern Villages Group Scheme. As a result of the drainage facilities which will be made available by this part of the Scheme, it has been possible to start building post war houses in the Parish of West Huntspill.

### Ante-Natal Clinics.

No Local Authority Ante-Natal Clinics are held in the area, supervision being conducted by General Practitioners and Midwives. A number of expectant mothers attend at the Clinic at the Health Centre, Mount Street, Bridgwater, when blood samples are taken for determination of blood grouping, Rhesus factor, etc.

### Infant Welfare.

Infant Welfare Clinics, for which the County Council are responsible, are held at Edington, Puriton, Woolavington, North Petherton, Nether Stowey, East Huntspill and West Huntspill.

### Water Supply.

Samples of water have been regularly taken from the various sources of supply during the year, and generally speaking these have been satisfactory. Except in special and isolated circumstances the quantity of water proved sufficient for the needs of the district.

Supply.	Number of examinations.	Report	
		Satisfactory.	Not satisfactory.
1. Fiddington	14	11	3
2. Goathurst	12	12	-
3. Thurloxton	12	11	1
4. Willoughby	15	14	1
5. Over Stowey	12	12	-

### Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR  
FOR 1953

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Forshaw and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my fourteenth Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1953.

Staff.

No alterations affecting the staff of the Department took place during the year, and the staff remains at one Junior Assistant below the approved establishment.

The Additional Sanitary Inspector has continued to assist the Engineer's staff as required in the inspection of property under the Building Byelaws, in accordance with the Council's instructions.

Complaints and Nuisances.

The number of complaints investigated during the year was 171 an increase of 22 on the previous year. In most cases nuisances were abated as a result of informal action and it was only found necessary to serve 5 Abatement Notices. On inspection a number of complaints were found to be not justified and no further action was taken in regard to them.

Of the nuisances found, 115 were abated during the year. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 373.

Water Supply.

Samples of water for bacteriological examination were taken from the five sources of supply controlled by the Council at monthly intervals during the year, and additional samples were obtained as found necessary. Four samples were taken for chemical analysis and were reported to be satisfactory.

A total of 120 visits were made in connection with water supply during the year.

Housing.

The number of inspections carried out under the Housing Acts was 164; 5 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost and four Demolition Orders were made by the Council. In 3 cases the Council agreed to accept undertakings from owners to carry out approved works within a stipulated time, and in 3 cases undertakings which had been previously accepted were fulfilled. 8 houses, the subject of Demolition Orders, were demolished during the year.



The high cost of building work is still one of the greatest difficulties encountered in getting repairs and improvements to property carried out, and there is an increasing tendency for owners themselves to carry out repair work to their property. There is of course, no objection to this if the persons concerned have the necessary technical experience and skill to undertake the work, but frequently this is not the case, and unsatisfactory work results.

523 visits were made during the year in regard to the reconditioning and alteration of existing houses and the installation of new sanitary fittings.

135 visits were made to houses in respect to which grants were made under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts and the Housing (Financial Provisions) Acts.

#### Overcrowding.

Five new cases of overcrowding were discovered during the year, and seven cases were abated by informal action.

Thirty three visits were made in connection with overcrowding.

#### Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

The following particulars indicate the action taken under Part I of the Factories Act, 1937:-

Premises	Number on Register	Number of Occupiers		
		Insp's.	Written Notices	prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority.	89	63	7	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority.	-	-	-	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises).	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	89	63	7	-



	No. of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.	
			Referred			
	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Insp.	By H.M. Insp.		
Want of cleanliness (S.1.)	4	4				
Overcrowding (S.2.)						
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)						
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	1	1				
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	1	1				
Sanitary conveniences (S.7)						
(a) insufficient	2	2				
(b) unsuitable or defective	4	2				
(c) Not separate for sexes						
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork).						
TOTAL	12	10				

### Bakehouses.

Twenty two visits were made to bakehouses, and informal notices were duly complied with.

### Shops.

Eighty inspections of shops were carried out.

### General Sanitation.

The following improvements were carried out, generally as a result of informal action:-

W.C.s	62
Baths	34
Sinks	39
Chemical closets	3
Drainage systems	36
Lavatory basins	29
Connections to water main	5
Connections to sewer	8
Larders	7
Urinals	2
W.C. flushing cisterns	1

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

### Licensed Premises.

Efforts were continued during the year to obtain improvements in sanitary conditions to licensed premises and as a result new sanitary accommodation for both sexes was provided at four inns and also in one village hall. One public house was completely reconditioned.



### Meat and Foods.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and slaughterhouses and 150 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has been found to be justified. 87 visits were made for this purpose.

Details of food condemned during the year are as follows:-

#### Beasts.

Beef	48 lbs.
------	---------

#### Sheep.

Carcase and organs	4
Mutton	14 lbs
Liver	1

#### Pigs.

Carcase and organs	1
Head and tongue	2
Mesenteries and intestines	4
Plucks	6

#### Other foods.

Tins, jars and pkts. of various foods	13
Rabbits	6

### Knackers Yard.

The knackers yard at Dunball is being maintained in very good condition and was visited on 8 occasions during the year.

### Milk and Dairies.

The number of retail purveyors of milk on the register is 7, and 29 visits were made for the inspection of dairies during the year.

### Ice Cream.

The number of premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream at the end of the year was 57, and 4 premises were also registered for the manufacture of ice cream. Each of these manufacturers produced ice cream by the "cold mix" method, followed by boiling of the product. 112 samples were taken during the year the results being as follows:-

76 samples were placed in provisional Grade 1.  
28 samples were placed in provisional Grade 2.  
No samples were placed in provisional Grade 3.  
8 samples were placed in provisional Grade 4.

These results are considered to be reasonably satisfactory.

A total of 150 visits were made in connection with the manufacture, storage and sale of ice cream.



### Moveable Dwellings.

125 visits were made during the year in connection with moveable dwellings.

There are now eight licensed camping sites in the district, all of which are small. Licences have been issued to station and use twenty seven caravans on individual sites, and there is an increasing tendency to use caravans as permanent homes.

### Infectious Diseases.

44 disinfections were carried out during the year, 71 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases.

### Verminous Premises.

11 visits were made to verminous premises and treatment for the destruction of vermin was carried out at 4 premises.

### Rodent Destruction.

29 visits were made in connection with rodent infestation in addition to those made by the Rodent Operative.

It was not found necessary to serve any enforcement notices requiring the destruction of rodents. Where infestation is found on agricultural land it is the practice to refer the matter to the County Agricultural Executive Committee and the necessary treatment is then carried out by the Committee's staff by arrangement with the occupier of the land.

To a large extent "Warfarin" has been used for rodent destruction in place of arsenic, zinc phosphide, etc., with very satisfactory results and considerable saving in time

### SUMMARY OF VISITS.

Water Supply	120
Drainage	151
Knackers Yard	8
Moveable Dwellings	125
Factories	63
Bakehouses	22
Shops	80
Rodent Infestation	29
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	75
Nuisances	373
New Work	523
Housing Inspections	164
Overcrowding	33
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	27
Infectious Diseases	71
Verminous Premises	11
Butcher' Shops and Slaughterhouses	150
Animals killed for home consumption	87
Dairies	29
Ice cream Premises	150
Miscellaneous Food Visits	20



Summary of visits cont.

Housing (R.W.) Acts, etc.	135
Food Preparing Premises	44
Licensed Premises	18
Piggeries and Poultry Farms	24
	<hr/>
	2,532
	<hr/>

This does not include visits made by the Additional Sanitary Inspector for the inspection of property under Building Byelaws.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Forshaw and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

F.A. MAILE,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

